

Testimony of U.S. Congressman Dean Heller
For the
Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley Water Rights
Settlement Act

Mr. CHAIRMAN and members of the Committee on Indian Affairs, thank you for inviting me to give testimony on the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley Water Rights Settlement Act. This legislation will settle water rights claims that have gone unresolved far too long for the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe of the Duck Valley Reservation in my district in northern Nevada.

The Duck Valley Reservation was established in 1877 and is located along the Nevada/Idaho border. Water in the arid western states is a precious commodity and is the lifeblood for farmers, ranchers, and wildlife. Without proper water management, none of this can exist.

With the appropriate allocation of the East Fork of the Owyhee River, Blue Creek, and Mary's Creek, the Tribe can realize its full potential for raising livestock, farming, fisheries, and maintain healthy wildlife populations. As you can see, this legislation is very important for the health of the Duck Valley Reservation.

The Shoshone Paiute Tribe of Idaho and Nevada have engaged in negotiations to resolve the water rights of the Duck Valley Reservation. The legislation under consideration today approves, ratifies, and confirms the agreement that the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation and the Upstream Water Users of the East Fork Owyhee River.

The Duck Valley Water Rights Settlement Act will complete the water agreement and provide adequate funding for water management and irrigation projects. I intend to introduce companion legislation in the near future to finally help resolve this important issue.

Thank you for your time and consideration.